

## Adventure, Posttraumatic Growth, and Wisdom

Hanna Kampman & Petra Walker

### Abstract

People have searched for adventure throughout history, exploring and processing deep meaningful questions that are often initiated by dark times in their lives. Similarly, adventure itself is known to challenge the individual in fundamental ways, developing and often demanding new ways of thinking, behaving, and being. Common narratives depict positive transformation aided by these adventure experiences and several therapies and outdoor programmes already utilise nature and adventure to help individuals navigate difficult times. This chapter explores these two often interconnected perspectives, namely: the potentially positive role of adventure when journeying forward after trauma; and growing and gaining wisdom through adventure.

Growth after adversity, most often referred to in the psychological literature as *Posttraumatic Growth (PTG)* is an emerging area in adventure research. Therefore, we will start by defining adventure, trauma, and growth as used in this chapter. After which the theory of posttraumatic growth will be described to better illustrate how adventuring might facilitate both the process and outcomes of growth. We will end by providing suggestions for future directions in this area. Throughout the chapter, the ideas will be illuminated through the stories told among the adventure community, therefore giving voice to the participants and researchers in this area.

## An Adventurer's Point of View: A New Me

*Ocean Sailing was a way to uncover parts of myself that I never knew existed. I joined the race as a last resort to bring myself out of the dark pit I have found myself in after the death of my sister, the loss of my job and a toxic relationship I'd just managed to get out of. Nothing else had worked. I'd tried therapy, travelling, going out with friends. Nothing seemed to shake me out of the darkness. I joined the race with a sense of "What's there to lose? Worst case scenario, I'll lose my life, no big deal". I was in despair. Yet, throughout the training, I found that I was gradually gaining increments of self-confidence, little by little. I was good at this new sport! I was useful to others on board as well, a feeling that had been somehow wiped out of me in the previous rough years. When the race began, I found myself enjoying the tranquillity of the sea and the never-ending blue horizon. It was a chance for me to pause and step out of that spinning whirl that my life had become. I found the moments to truly listen to myself and my needs. I also found support. Plenty of support! From mentors, like the captain, and the other crew. We were a team; we were a family. And the best interest of the team was something that took away the focus from my own problems and nudged me to focus on something greater than myself: the wellbeing of others and our boat. I found that being surrounded by people who believed in me and believed I could do this ocean racing more than I believed in myself at that time; one of the most valuable aspects of the adventure. I entered this race a broken person, defeated by life. But being tested and tried in new things that I seemed to get hold of and being encouraged by a supportive team worked wonders on my fragile self-esteem. As the adventure progressed and the oceans became colder, wilder and more dangerous, my skills gradually grew and by the end of my journey, I could not recognise the person I'd become.*

*I'd taken on a huge challenge and came out the other end as a winner. After the race I had a newfound appreciation for life, and concentrated on the things I had, rather than the things that were missing. I transferred the attitude of "nothing is impossible" to my everyday life and kept pushing myself to more challenging situations, expanding what I thought was possible for me. I achieved a lot more in the years after the race, than all the previous years of my life. The best though was the life stance I was left with: happier about myself and my life, grateful for who and what I had, more sure of myself. People who saw me months after the race commented on how I now radiated a healthy confidence. My life has truly been transformed because of this Ocean Adventure.*

Memnia Theodorou

## Adventure, Posttraumatic Growth, and Wisdom

*I am currently pondering about the northern lights. You cannot know if they exist or if you just see them. Everything is very uncertain, and exactly that makes me calm.*

Tuutikki

The notion of growth through adventuring is not new. People have gone on adventures throughout history, exploring and processing deep meaningful questions in their lives. As

early as 1908, a seminal anthropological work by Arnold van Gennep, “The Rites of Passage” highlighted the idea of spending time in the wilderness (often alone) in a *vision quest* to grow and gain wisdom (van Gennep et al., 2019). Echoing this, Naor and Mayselless (2020) recently noted that immersing oneself into the wilderness has been used as a ritual across many cultures to aid contemplation around life’s purpose and meaning.

Facing the dark side of life, such as adversity and trauma, requires an individual to contemplate questions that perhaps previously could be avoided (e.g., mortality). Research has suggested that adventure often involves substantial risks and (un)expected challenges (e.g., Ewert, 1989; Fletcher, 2010) which can also create adverse experiences. Equally, adventures aid individuals to tap into previously unknown resources, realise their potential, and experience awe and wonder at the natural world as they “go knowingly into the unknown” (Reid & Kampman, 2020, p. 3). Therefore, it appears that one of the various motives behind why people adventure is to both contemplate on existing challenges in their lives, and to grow from inherent challenges and opportunities that the adventuring poses.

This chapter explores posttraumatic growth (PTG) and adventure from these two often interconnected perspectives, namely: the potentially positive role of adventure when journeying forwards after trauma; and the growth and wisdom gained through adventuring. It is important to note that there is of course also a lot of evidence for growth through adventure without the disruption of trauma, for example due to the disruption via “peak experience(s).” This can be seen in the many descriptions and quotes in other chapters of this book (such as Chapter 12 on transformation or transcendence). However, this chapter is particularly exploring how individuals potentially grow from adversities.

## **Defining Adventure, Trauma and Posttraumatic Growth**

There are various ways to define “adventure” (e.g., see overview in Reid & Kampman, 2020). However, in this chapter, we conceptualise adventure as: “to go knowingly into the unknown on expeditions, travels and experiences that are unusual or daring, and that involve opportunities for taking risks, whilst demanding commitment and responsibility” (Reid & Kampman, 2020, p. 9). Both the “unknown” and “risks” create the potential for highly challenging life situations, which can test the individuals beyond their previous level of physiological and psychological functioning as illustrated in this quote: “*I think it was an adventure because it pushed my emotional limits, physical limits, it pushed every single limit I had.*” (Emma in Reid & Kampman, 2020, p. 4; (see also reference to Sisu and going beyond one’s perceived limits in Chapter 10).

However, as suggested, sometimes individuals embark on these adventures *because* they have faced adversity, even trauma (e.g., Burke & Sabiston, 2012; Theodorou & Kampman, 2021.), and choose to go knowingly into the unknown after this trauma. For us to be able to discuss why this might be, we must first define and discuss adversity and trauma.

In this chapter, we define trauma and adversity within the framework of PTG as a “highly challenging life event” which is out of the ordinary for most people, producing “psychological difficulties not in a vulnerable few, but in large numbers of people exposed to them” (Janoff-Bulman, 1992, p. 50). However, we also recognise the subjective nature of trauma. This means that similar experiences might be traumatising for some whilst not for others. Correspondingly, what is “unusual or daring” and “involves a risk” is also subjective, therefore adventure and the challenges it poses to individuals could mean different things to different people.

Going through trauma or severe adversity is always an embodied experience, impacting the individual’s nervous system, biopsychology and relationship with one’s body

(Hefferon & Kampman, 2021; Kampman, 2021; Levine, 2008, 2010; van der Kolk, 1996). To give an example, the body reacts to a psychological and emotional threat as much as it does to a physical threat (e.g., flight, fight) with accompanying chemicals (e.g., cortisol) and with potentially altered neural pathways. As humans we also interpret the world through our bodies (Hefferon & Kampman, 2021; Merleau-Ponty, 2013), thus, the body becomes an essential aspect of exploring growth following trauma and adventure. How we adventure, and what an adventure is for us, depends on our bodies and we often choose our adventures according to the body (e.g., adaptive sailing, rock climbing) and experience the adventuring and growth through our bodies (Ellingson, 2017; Hefferon et al., 2009; Hefferon & Kampman, 2021; Kampman et al., 2015; Kampman & Hefferon, 2020). Therefore, the body will be also given a “meaningful presence” throughout this chapter (Ellingson, 2017, p. 1; Hefferon & Kampman, 2021).

## **Posttraumatic Growth**

The struggle with the above mentioned, unforeseen “seismic events” which “seriously challenges or shatters an individual’s assumptive world” (p. 4) can, in some situations and *with time*, also turn into “positive psychological changes” (Tedeschi, et al., 2018, p. 3). This positive “cognitive, emotional, behavioural, and, more recently, biological” transformation is most commonly referred to as posttraumatic growth (PTG; Tedeschi et al., 2018, p. 25). This chapter subscribes to the position that PTG can be seen both as a process and an outcome, which unfolds with personal pace and with time (e.g., see discussions around alternative perspectives Jayawickreme & Blackie, 2014; Joseph & Linley, 2008; Wadey et al., 2021). Journeying forwards after trauma is first and foremost a personal endeavour, and we want to emphasise that it is completely normal not to experience PTG, nor should this be expected

from oneself or others. All too often, when people struggle with the aftermath of adversity, this is viewed as an “abnormal response” to a stressful event rather than “adaptive responses to abnormal events” (Janoff-Bulman, 1992, p. 95). Therefore, we want to highlight that growth is only one potential trajectory after adversity, it is not the only one.

Equally, it would be harmful to solely tell stories of enduring distress as many individuals recognise transformative changes in themselves after navigating these highly challenging times. Individuals identifying with posttraumatic growth after adversity often notice positive changes in their *personal strength* (e.g., they are stronger in some ways than before) or in the way they *relate to others* (e.g., they develop more close, authentic relationships). People also report *recognising and experiencing new possibilities* (e.g., finding new hobbies and careers), *appreciating life more* (e.g., appreciating the uniqueness of one’s life) and changes in their *spiritual and existential* perspectives (e.g., feeling they are part of wider humanity) (Hefferon et al., 2010; Kampman et al., 2015; Tedeschi et al., 2017, 2018). More embodied outcomes are also reported, such as “a new awareness of the body” (Hefferon, 2012; Hefferon et al., 2010; Hefferon & Kampman, 2021), as well as embodied versions of the previously cognitively perceived outcomes, such as personal strength, physical strength, or recognising and appreciating the diversity of bodies and abilities (Kampman, 2021) and superior performance among athletes (Howells et al., 2017). Indeed, we should include the “body into all explorations and models of growth” (Kampman, 2021, p. 261).

These transformative changes can be eventually witnessed in an individual’s actions, as their behaviour shifts according to these changes in their thinking (Hobfoll et al., 2007; Kampman & Hefferon, 2020). One of these transformative changes could lead to actions such as going on an *adventure*, for example, as part of *recognising and experiencing new*

*possibilities* as illustrated in a beautiful qualitative study of breast cancer survivors who climbed Mount Kilimanjaro by Burke and Sabiston:

*I was terrified of dying. It wasn't until I began to talk about death and dying and came to terms with the fact that I would die, whether it was a year from now or ten years from now, that I made a shift and my perspective of life changed. I began thinking of what I wanted to do with my life and I started setting goals for myself. I really enjoy taking on new challenges and striving toward a goal. And climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro is one of those goals.*

(Bonnie in Burke & Sabiston, 2012, p. 8)

Equally these changes might evolve during the adventure, such as people could feel *stronger* as they navigate their adventures: *"Sometimes I liken myself to becoming Lara Croft when I'm adventuring because I just become her. I'm tougher and wiser and more capable without the cotton-wool stuff that I get at home"* (Lara in Reid & Kampman, 2020, p. 6).

Growth may also occur after the journey as people explore and contemplate the changes which the adventure has initiated, such as *changed spiritual and existential* perspectives as illustrated in Reid and Kampman: *"the journey just became bigger than me" the adventure "gifted me a pathway to help people"* (Ted in Reid & Kampman, p. 6).

It is key to recognise that different traumas and trauma profiles (Kira, 2021) can also lead to different outcomes and the context in which the growth evolves matters (e.g., Chopko et al., 2013; Kampman, 2021; Karanci et al., 2012; Kira et al., 2013; Kılıç et al., 2016; Shakespeare-Finch & Armstrong, 2010; Shuwiekh et al., 2018).

These changes can also take time, and therefore, PTG is not seen as reactive, but rather the process and outcomes evolve as the individual develops new ways of "thinking, feeling and behaving" (Tedeschi et al., 2018, p. 5). Even if the outcomes might be "akin to an epiphany about life" (Tedeschi et al., 2018, p. 6) and seem quite sudden, the meaning and implications of this epiphany will still be processed with unfolding time, potentially long after

the adventuring itself. It is not the event itself that produces the growth, it is the individual working hard to make sense of the aftermath of it, and its implications to their life. Therefore, for some individuals, this process might be initiated and/or facilitated by adventuring, as this participant in a wilderness canoe expedition discovered:

*You are out there in the wilderness ... you don't worry about watches ... is your tie straight and that stuff. It helped me finalize priorities. It helped me focus on what my priorities are and what's important and what's not.*

(Participant, Anderson & Schleien, 1997, p. 225)

### **Process of Posttraumatic Growth**

According to the theory of PTG the initial adverse event(s) are evaluated by the individual and if the individual's worldview provides context to what has happened, the emotional distress can be mitigated by the beliefs and coping mechanisms employed to potentially facilitate and experience resilience. Resilience is defined here as a dynamic process *before, during and after* adversity leading to a positive adaptation (Chmitorz et al., 2018; Jntema et al., 2019; Tedeschi et al., 2018). Often adventuring provides opportunities to utilise and develop resilience as individuals push themselves beyond their imagined limits, challenging their mental and physical skills, to redefine what is possible: *"I've learned to toughen up. Strategies and tactics with coping and dealing with stuff and don't sweat the small stuff"* (Lara in Reid & Kampman, 2020, p. 6).

However, there are times when reality comes even closer, either in life in general or during the adventure, when something fundamental is shattered, causing distress and challenging core beliefs that the individual holds. This initiates an automatic and intrusive rumination, requiring the individual to work through the challenge, engage in self-analysis



and reflection, manage emotional distress, and employ coping strategies (Tedeschi et al., 2018). The fundamental challenge and mortality awareness is captured by one adventurer in the following quote: *“The possibility of dying changed my whole attitude on things”* (Jessica in Burke & Sabiston, 2012, p. 10).

Here is where adventuring could serve people in several ways. People might choose to go on a solo adventure, to detach themselves from their everyday life and other people to be able to engage in self-analysis and reflection. Participants in a qualitative study by Kalisch et al. (2011) described this desire, stating both, *“I couldn’t wait to be alone and reflect on my life”* (p. 7) and *“I knew it was my time to relax and think about things”* (p. 7). Alternatively, people might choose to travel with others and gain opportunities for self-disclosure and shared stories away from normal life, as illustrated by Stuart, who participated in inclusive adventure training:

*... maybe one of the benefits is giving guys a chance to meet other guys who’ve been through something like they have. That’s why I’m talking about this to you today I suppose, so someone else might hear something in my story that fits their life, that makes them feel like they’re not going through stuff alone.*

(Stuart in Carless et al., 2013, p. 127)

Adventure can also offer ample opportunities to rewrite personal narratives, co-create a new embodied story and deliberately change schemas around oneself and the body after trauma, as beautifully expressed by Bonnie in Burke and Sabiston (2012):

This experience is part of my self-realisation or my self-discovery. It is helping me realise how strong I really am. I am not a mountain climber. I don’t see myself as a climber. But I really surprised myself at how much I could do. I look at other things in my life and say to myself ‘if I can climb that mountain, then I can deal with this

too.” I have much more faith in myself. I am more aware that I can face just about any challenge and that is very satisfying.

(Bonnie in Burke & Sabiston, 2012, p. 11)

Nature, wilderness, and adventure can potentially provide an environment and an experience where individuals can reframe their initial traumatic experiences including vulnerability, danger, or helplessness and rewrite their stories to include alternative narratives of safety, strength, and perseverance (e.g., see Harper et al., 2014). A personal narrative around “a hurt, disabled body” can become “a skilled adventuring body” with new abilities and skills.

These examples help us to understand how the process of growth can be facilitated by adventuring: equipping people with tools to accept the changes in their world and enable them to grow. Growth often dances together with the challenges; therefore, some enduring distress might still be present even when people recognise growth in some areas. Adventure can, at its best, give tools for the individual to navigate the challenging thoughts and feelings when these re-emerge, for example, Chris, a veteran with PTSD, uses images from his diving adventures to calm himself elsewhere: *“If I have to go back to a place of stillness or quietness, then I can go back to those images.”* (Chris in Walker & Kampman, 2021, p. 6). People can therefore emerge from their adventures as more resilient (e.g., Reid & Kampman, 2020), with expanded coping strategies and knowledge (e.g., Craig et al., 2020; Naor & Mayseless, 2020; Reid & Kampman, 2020), increased wisdom (e.g., Naor & Mayseless, 2020; Reid & Kampman, 2020), and compassion for others and for nature (e.g., Burke & Sabiston, 2012 Walker & Kampman, 2021).

The body should be acknowledged as an essential travel companion, as the body is at the centre of these adventures, pushed to the limits, challenged, whilst getting stronger and discovering new abilities. *"I would say that the physical challenges of it as well also made a difference in my life because it's not always going to be easy and things might not always go the way you planned"* (Wassif, 2014, p. 107).

Finally, it is essential to acknowledge that both the process and growth are continuously evolving (Kampman, 2021). Each adventure comes with different contexts (e.g., wilderness vs motorbikes) and different intra- and interpersonal challenges (e.g., solo vs group) potentially facilitating different aspects of growth (e.g., process and outcomes). Personal growth from adventuring is a journey that starts when the individual *prepares for the adventure* (e.g., planning, practising skills, "going knowingly"), continues *during the adventure* (e.g., facing new challenges, skill acquisition and utilisation, pushing limits, challenging old narratives) and *after the adventure* (e.g., reflection, further narrative revisions, and behavioural changes).

The potential benefits of adventuring to an individuals' wellbeing are well recognised within several therapeutic practices and are used in different variations to help individuals to navigate challenging times. Some examples of these include the Integrated Outdoor Adventure Programme (Anderson et al., 1997), Wilderness Therapy (Bettmann et al., 2016), Adventure-based counselling (Fletcher & Hinkle, 2002), Adventure-based group therapy (Norton & Tucker, 2010), Adventure-based group work and interventions (Norton & Tucker, 2010), and Adventure- and recreation-based group interventions (Voruganti et al., 2006). Some researchers suggest these should be grouped together under Adventure Therapy (Norton, 2011; Tucker & Norton, 2013) or grouped more broadly alongside non-therapeutic adventuring under Adventure Psychology as proposed by Reid & Kampman in 2020 (p. 9) although it is important to acknowledge that each has distinct elements in them. Meanwhile,

the research around embodiment, and adventuring in the context of PTG is still sparse, therefore what follows is mainly theoretical and will hopefully offer a point of departure to new adventures within research.

### **Common Facilitators of Posttraumatic Growth**

Before we examine Adventure and the various ways it could facilitate PTG, it is important to introduce some known facilitators from earlier studies. A meta-analysis by Prati and Pietrtoni (2009) suggested that optimism, social support, and active coping strategies (religious, acceptance and reappraisal) all had significant positive effects on PTG. As did spirituality, which they equated with religion (Prati & Pietrtoni, 2009) but which has also been defined as “a personal journey to understanding the world, the environment and a person’s place in it” (Tedeschi et al., 2018, p. 116). Physical activity, sport and leisure have also been identified as a facilitator for growth (Kampman et al., 2015; Wadey et al., 2021). Of course, these factors often combine. For example, a search for meaning combined with physical activity, and reappraisal coping, can result in the creation of a new identity, possibly as an athlete (Kampman & Hefferon, 2020), or may we suggest, an adventurer. It is also possible that these facilitators of PTG could facilitate post-adventure growth in those who have not previously experienced trauma.

### **Potential Facilitators of Growth in Adventuring**

As briefly mentioned before, adventuring has the potential to facilitate both the processes and outcomes of growth *before* (preparing), *during* (adventuring) and *after* (assimilating and accommodating) the adventure. Adventure can enable growth and wisdom through: reducing negative symptoms associated with the trauma; stabilising, calming and

grounding; and producing positive embodied, action-oriented psychological phenomena. The following section will explore the developing research around adventure, growth, and PTG. The section is not intended as an exhaustive list of the potential facilitators of growth in adventuring. However, the aim is to start a conversation among adventure, growth and PTG researchers. Therefore, it also ends with suggestions for future research.

## Reducing

*You feel so free out there, you don't worry about anything, you don't think about the bills you've got to pay or your life problems, you're just kind of free of thought. That's kind of what makes it all worthwhile, just for that whatever, 5 min of freedom.*

(Participant 1, Brymer & Schweitzer, 2013, p. 868)

Being away from everyday life appears to decrease both everyday anxieties as well as severe symptoms of trauma. For example, the level of clinical symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD; a trauma and stressor-related disorder) and trait anxiety reduced during a sailing intervention (Gelkopf et al., 2013); when engaging in physical activity and sport (Caddick & Smith, 2014), and whilst engaging with Scuba diving. Peter who suffers from PTSD contrasts the peace of the underwater world with his normal life saying: *"There is no noise, there is no bangs, there's no cracks, there's nothings that trigger people like me"* (Peter in Walker & Kampman, 2021, p. 6). Therefore, adventuring provides the opportunity to be away from everyday hassles and potential trauma reminders, being fully present whilst often engaging in physical activity which is a known facilitator of PTG (e.g., Day, 2013; Kampman & Hefferon, 2020; Kampman, 2021; Wadey et al., 2021; Wadey & Day, 2018).

Adventuring can reduce some of the negative symptoms, carving space for calm and further awareness of what is possible (Kampman, 2021). *"You are thinking in the present*

*moment instead of thinking about previous invasive thoughts that you get on top of the water”* (Chris in Walker & Kampman, 2021, p. 6). Through this reduction of negative symptoms, adventure experience can aid to stabilise the body and the mind whilst giving individuals’ attention a new purpose.

### **Stabilising, Calming, and Grounding**

Silence: In their empirical and theoretical literature review on solo wilderness experiences, Naor and Mayselless (2020) suggested that silence had a significant role in allowing the mind to rest from cognitive processing. For the process of PTG this could mean an opportunity to move from intrusive rumination into a more purposeful place of reflection and contemplation. The solitude and wilderness appeared to offer a unique opportunity for “tranquillity, peace” and “cognitive freedom” to engage in self-analysis and reflection – essential for the process of growth to evolve. Time spent in solitude offers a break from “daily demands” and “human interference” (p.9) and adventuring in nature, can become “a sanctuary for the healing process, partially because it is non-judgmental” (Dustin et al., 2011, p. 331). This could offer insights into why individuals quite organically sometimes choose to adventure after trauma. As Jack describes this: *“You’ve just cut out all the background noise”* (Jack in Reid & Kampman, 2020, p. 5).

Even when adventuring together with others, the natural environments can offer “soft fascination” for the adventurers – it can hold their attention without demanding it (Duvall & Sullivan, 2016; Kampman, 2022; Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989). This can offer individuals and their attention a break and facilitate mindfulness and flow experiences. This focus on the present, instead of the daily basic life struggles, , has already been found useful in veteran populations (Walker & Kampman, 2021; Wassif, 2014). An example of this is given by Ben a

diver who suffers from PTSD: *“When you enter the water, it’s not like you are in threat, but you are in a situation where you have to focus and so your mind calms down ... it’s almost like mindfulness, you become in the moment”* (Ben in Walker & Kampman, 2021, p. 4).

Adventuring can therefore become an embodied mindfulness experience where the individual is engaging with the experience through the body and employing different senses. Again, a quote from Ben, a diver, illustrates this: *“The world seems to slow down because you are completely fixated on physical senses”* (Ben in Walker & Kampman, 2021, p. 6).

## **Producing**

Wellbeing: through (adaptive) physical activity and sport, adventuring can increase subjective positive affective states and quality of life (Caddick & Smith, 2014; Reese et al., 2019), facilitate psychological wellbeing through increasing inner strength and motivation, providing opportunities for achievements, social wellbeing and ecotherapy (Caddick & Smith, 2014).

Silence and wilderness can aid the contemplation around purpose and meaning in life (Naor & Mayseless, 2020) and for example, climbing on Mt. Kilimanjaro was found to provide an opportunity for the women, who had survived cancer, to (a) nurture priorities, (b) foster self-belief, and (c) cultivate connections (Burke & Sabiston, 2012). The women were able to embrace physical and mental challenges, physical discomfort, and push themselves beyond initial limits. These findings were echoed in Reid and Kampman (2020) where new physiological and psychological skills were found and developed through “pushing boundaries” during the adventure to enable a wider tool kit of skills in the future. Therefore, “expanding their capacities and capabilities for stronger functioning in future” (Reid & Kampman, 2020, p. 6). The transference of skills and ideas into life outside of adventure is

described beautifully in the following quote: "*I consider myself a perfectionist in certain things, and after the first trip, I realised that perfection cannot be a part of the wilderness experience. I wanted the chance for that in my everyday life*" (male, 43 years old, cerebral palsy in Anderson & Scheien, 1997, p. 225).

"Meaningful activities" (Burke & Sabiston, 2012, p. 13) and "meaningful leisure engagement" (Kampman et al., 2015, p. 290; Kampman, 2021) such as adventure, sport, art, high altitude mountain trekking, can facilitate personal growth and transformation through to discovering of "new abilities, hidden talents, and rediscover existing skills in a new way" (Kampman et al., 2015, p. 290). Meaningful leisure, such as adventure, can aid independence after trauma and provide new meaningful relationships, camaraderie, and offer opportunities to ask for help (Kampman, 2021; Walker & Kampman, 2021).

New relationships: preparing for an adventure or going for an adventure with other people can produce new meaningful relationships with camaraderie and shared wisdom. As it is not uncommon for people to adventure after adversities, individuals might quite organically find role models from the adventure community and offer each other opportunities for self-disclosure and schema change. Rewriting cognitive, emotional, behavioural, and embodied pathways through adventuring evolves with time and the adventure community can potentially offer ample examples of individuals who have travelled similar paths.

## **Concluding Thoughts**

What we have hopefully provided here is a point of departure for research adventures around PTG. We want to emphasise that we are not considering adventuring as a panacea for trauma and adversity. Researchers should carefully consider some of the



challenges that adventuring can pose for individuals journeying forward after trauma (e.g., further injuries and trauma, avoidance behaviours, etc.). However, there is age old wisdom and cumulating psychological research around the benefits of adventuring for growth experiences, and we can learn a lot from this thriving community to enable us to consider alternative ways of journeying onwards after challenging times.

### **Key Considerations for Future**

**Inclusivity:** adventure and adventuring belong to everyone; we must consider who we are including/excluding with our definitions of adventure? Therefore, it is essential to emphasise that there are elements in adventure that are subjective. We should be mindful so that the definition does not become another aid for discrimination.

**Diversity:** would be essential to explore adventure and growth within different racial, ethnic, and cultural groups. Contemporary adventure is still often attached to the affluent white hetero man, despite its strong indigenous and global history. Therefore, it would be valuable to listen to the unheard voices within adventuring and growth, whose stories are we not listening to?

**Embodied perspectives:** The body must become a meaningful presence in our endeavours to explore adventuring, growth, and posttraumatic growth. Various bodies with different abilities adventure, we need to give these bodies a presence in our research endeavours. When exploring this area, we could embrace more embodied ways to research (e.g., adventuring together).

**Acknowledgement:** The authors of this chapter want to acknowledge the pioneering researchers in the area of posttraumatic growth and adventuring for enabling many of the insights discussed in this chapter. Thank you.

## References

- Anderson, L., Schleien, S. J., McAvoy, L., Lais, G. & Seligmann, D. (1997). Creating positive change through an integrated outdoor adventure program. *Therapeutic Recreation Journal*, 31(4), 214–229.
- Bettmann, J. E., Gillis, H. L., Speelman, E. A., Parry, K. J., & Case, J. M. (2016). A meta-analysis of wilderness therapy outcomes for private pay clients. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 25(9), 2659–2673. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-016-0439-0>
- Brymer, E., & Schweitzer, R. D. (2013). The search for freedom in extreme sports: A phenomenological exploration. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 14(6), 865–873.
- Burke, S., & Sabiston, C. (2012). Fostering growth in the survivorship experience: Investigating breast cancer survivors' lived experiences scaling Mt. Kilimanjaro from a posttraumatic growth perspective. *The Qualitative Report*. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2012.1783>
- Caddick, N., & Smith, B. (2014). The impact of sport and physical activity on the well-being of combat veterans: A systematic review. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 15(1), 9–18. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2013.09.011>
- Carless, D., Peacock, S., McKenna, J., & Cooke, C. (2013). Psychosocial outcomes of an inclusive adapted sport and adventurous training course for military personnel. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 35(24), 2081–2088. <https://doi.org/10.3109/09638288.2013.802376>
- Chmitorz, A., Kunzler, A., Helmreich, I., Tüscher, O., Kalisch, R., Kubiak, T., Wessa, M., & Lieb, K. (2018). Intervention studies to foster resilience – A systematic review and proposal for a resilience framework in future intervention studies. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 59, 78–100. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2017.11.002>

- Chopko, B. A., Palmieri, P. A., & Adams, R. E. (2013). Associations between police stress and alcohol use: Implications for practice. *Journal of Loss and Trauma, 18*(5), 482–497.
- Craig, P., Alger, D., Bennett, J., & Martin, T. (2020). The transformative nature of fly-fishing for veterans and military personnel with posttraumatic stress disorder. *Therapeutic Recreation Journal, 54*(2). <https://doi.org/10.18666/TRJ-2020-V54-I2-9965>
- Day, M. C. (2013). The role of initial physical activity experiences in promoting posttraumatic growth in Paralympic athletes with an acquired disability. *Disability and Rehabilitation, 35*(24), 2064–2072. <https://doi.org/10.3109/09638288.2013.805822>
- Dustin, D., Bricker, N., Arave, J., Wall, W., & Wendt, G. (2011). The promise of river running as a therapeutic medium for veterans coping with post-traumatic stress disorder. *Therapeutic Recreation Journal, 326–340*.
- Duvall, J., & Sullivan, W. C. (2016). How to get more out of the green exercise experience: Insights from attention restoration therapy. In J. Barton, R. Bragg, C. Wood, & J. Pretty (Eds.), *Green exercise* (1st ed., pp. 37–45). Routledge.
- Ellingson, L. L. (2017). *Embodiment in qualitative research*. Taylor & Francis.
- Ewert, A. W. (1989). *Outdoor adventure pursuits: Foundations, models, and theories*. Publishing Horizons.
- Fletcher, R. (2010). The emperor's new adventure: Public secrecy and the paradox of adventure tourism. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, 39*(1), 6–33.
- Fletcher, T. B., & Hinkle, J. S. (2002). Adventure based counseling: An innovation in counseling. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 80*(3), 277–285.
- Gelkopf, M., Hasson-Ohayon, I., Bikman, M., & Kravetz, S. (2013). Nature adventure rehabilitation for combat-related posttraumatic chronic stress disorder: A randomized control trial. *Psychiatry Research, 209*(3), 485–493.

- Harper, N. J., Norris, J., & D'astous, M. (2014). Veterans and the outward bound experience: An evaluation of impact and meaning. *Ecopsychology*, *6*(3), 165–173.  
<https://doi.org/10.1089/eco.2013.0101>
- Hefferon, K. (2012). Bringing back the body into positive psychology: The theory of corporeal posttraumatic growth in breast cancer survivorship. *Psychology*, *3*(12), 1238–1242.  
<https://doi.org/10.4236/psych.2012.312A183>
- Hefferon, K., Grealy, M., & Mutrie, N. (2009). *Post-traumatic growth and life threatening physical illness: A systematic review of the qualitative literature*, 343–378.  
<https://doi.org/10.1348/135910708X332936>
- Hefferon, K., Grealy, M., & Mutrie, N. (2010). Transforming from cocoon to butterfly: The potential role of the body in the process of posttraumatic growth. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, *50*(2), 224–247. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022167809341996>
- Hefferon, K., & Kampman, H. (2021). Taking an Embodied approach to posttraumatic growth research and sport. In R. Wadey, D. Melissa, & K. Howells (Eds.), *Growth following adversity in sport a mechanism to positive change*. 1st ed. Routledge.
- Hobfoll, S. E., Hall, B. J., Canetti-Nisim, D., Galea, S., Johnson, R. J., & Palmieri, P. A. (2007). Refining our understanding of traumatic growth in the face of terrorism: Moving from meaning cognitions to doing what is meaningful. *Applied Psychology*, *56*(3), 345–366.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1464-0597.2007.00292.x>
- Howells, K., Sarkar, M., & Fletcher, D. (2017). Can athletes benefit from difficulty? A systematic review of growth following adversity in competitive sport. In *Progress in brain research* (Vol. 234, pp. 117–159). Elsevier. <https://doi.org/10.1016/bs.pbr.2017.06.002>
- IJntema, R. C., Burger, Y. D., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2019). Reviewing the labyrinth of psychological resilience: Establishing criteria for resilience-building programs. *Consulting*

*Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 71(4), 288–304.

<https://doi.org/10.1037/cpb0000147>

Janoff-Bulman, R. (1992). *Shattered assumptions: Towards a new psychology of trauma*. Free Press.

Jayawickreme, E., & Blackie, L. E. R. (2014). *Post-traumatic growth as positive personality change: Evidence, Controversies and future directions*, 28(4), 20.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/per.1963>

Joseph, S., & Linley, P. A. (2008). *Trauma, recovery, and growth: Positive psychological perspectives on posttraumatic stress* (pp. xi, 372). John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Kalisch, K. R., Bobilya, A. J., & Daniel, B. (2011). The outward bound solo: A study of participants' perceptions. *Journal of Experiential Education*, 34(1), 1–18.

<https://doi.org/10.5193/JEE34.1.1>

Kampman, H. (2021). Exploring the complex relationship between posttraumatic growth, sport, and athletes with acquired disabilities. Ph.D. Thesis University of East London School of Psychology. <https://doi.org/10.15123/uel.89w7z>

Kampman, H. (2022). How to prepare for adversity. In C. Van Nieuwerburgh & P. William (Eds.), *From surviving to thriving: A student's guide to feeling and doing well at university*. SAGE.

Kampman, H., & Hefferon, K. (2020). 'Find a sport and carry on': Posttraumatic growth and achievement in British Paralympic athletes. *International Journal of Wellbeing*, 10(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.5502/ijw.v10i1.765>

Kampman, H., Hefferon, K., Wilson, M., & Beale, J. (2015). "I can do things now that people thought were impossible, actually, things that I thought were impossible": A meta-synthesis of the qualitative findings on posttraumatic growth and severe physical injury.

*Canadian Psychology/Psychologie Canadienne*, 56(3), 283–294.

<https://doi.org/10.1037/cap0000031>

Kaplan, R. & Kaplan, S. (1989). *The experience of nature: A psychological perspective*.

Cambridge University Press.

Karanci, A. N., Işıklı, S., Aker, A. T., Gül, E. İ., Erkan, B. B., Özkol, H., & Güzel, H. Y. (2012).

Personality, posttraumatic stress and trauma type: Factors contributing to posttraumatic growth and its domains in a Turkish community sample. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*, 3(1), 17303.

Kira, I. A. (2021). Taxonomy of stressors and traumas: An update of the development-based trauma framework (DBTF): A life-course perspective on stress and trauma. *Traumatology*.

<https://doi.org/10.1037/trm0000305>

Kira, I. A., Aboumediene, S., Ashby, J. S., Odenat, L., Mohanesh, J., & Alamia, H. (2013). The dynamics of posttraumatic growth across different trauma types in a Palestinian sample.

*Journal of Loss and Trauma*, 18(2), 120–139.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/15325024.2012.679129>

Kılıç, C., Magruder, K. M., & Koryürek, M. M. (2016). Does trauma type relate to posttraumatic growth after war? A pilot study of young Iraqi war survivors living in Turkey.

*Transcultural psychiatry*, 53(1), 110–123.

Levine, P. A. (2008). *Healing trauma*. ReadHowYouWant.com

Levine, P. A. (2010). *In an unspoken voice: How the body releases trauma and restores goodness*. North Atlantic Books.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (2013). *Phenomenology of perception*. 1st ed. Routledge.

- Naor, L., & Mayselless, O. (2020). The wilderness solo experience: A unique practice of silence and solitude for personal growth. *Frontiers in Psychology, 11*, 547067.  
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.547067>
- Norton, C. L., & Tucker, A. R. (2010). New Heights. *Groupwork, 20*(2), 24–44.
- Prati, G., & Pietratori, L. (2009). Optimism, social support and coping strategies as factors contributing to posttraumatic growth: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Loss and Trauma, 14*, 364–388. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15325020902724271>
- Reese, R. F., Hadeed, S., Craig, H., Beyer, A., & Gosling, M. (2019). EcoWellness: Integrating the natural world into wilderness therapy settings with intentionality. *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning, 19*(3), 202–215.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14729679.2018.1508357>
- Reid, P., & Kampman, H. (2020). Exploring the psychology of extended-period expeditionary adventurers: Going knowingly into the unknown. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise, 46*, 101608. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2019.101608>
- Shakespeare-Finch, J., & Armstrong, D. (2010). Trauma type and posttrauma outcomes: Differences between survivors of motor vehicle accidents, sexual assault, and bereavement. *Journal of Loss and Trauma, 15*(2), 69–82.
- Shuwiekh, H., Kira, I. A., & Ashby, J. S. (2018). What are the personality and trauma dynamics that contribute to posttraumatic growth? *International Journal of Stress Management, 25*(2), 181–194. <https://doi.org/10.1037/str0000054>
- Tedeschi, R. G., Cann, A., Taku, K., Senol-Durak, E., & Calhoun, L. G. (2017). The posttraumatic growth inventory: A revision integrating existential and spiritual change: posttraumatic growth inventory and spiritual change. *Journal of Traumatic Stress, 30*(1), 11–18.  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/jts.22155>

Tedeschi, R. G., Shakespeare-Finch, J., Taku, K., & Calhoun, L. G. (2018). *Posttraumatic growth theory, research, and applications*. Routledge.

- Theodorou, M. & Kampman, H. (2021). "Taking the helm of life": Exploring the role of "blue" adventure in the experience of post traumatic growth in women who participated in ocean racing sailing after the loss of a loved one. [Manuscript in preparation]

Department of Psychology, University of East London. Tucker, A. R., & Norton, C. L. (2013).

The use of adventure therapy techniques by clinical social workers: Implications for practice and training. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 41(4), 333–343.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10615-012-0411-4>

van der Kolk, B. A. (1996). The body keeps score: Approaches to the psychobiology of posttraumatic stress disorder. In *Traumatic stress: The effects of overwhelming experience on mind, body, and society* (pp. 214–241). Guilford Press.

van Gennep, A., Kertzer, D. I., Vizedom, M. B., & Caffee, G. L. (2019). *The rites of passage* (2nd ed.). University of Chicago Press.

Voruganti, L. N., Whatham, J., Bard, E., Parker, G., Babbey, C., Ryan, J.,... & MacCrimmon, D. J. (2006). Going beyond: An adventure-and recreation-based group intervention promotes well-being and weight loss in schizophrenia. *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 51(9), 575–580.

Wadey, R., & Day, M. (2018). A longitudinal examination of leisure time physical activity following amputation in England. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 37, 251–261.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2017.11.005>

Wadey, R., Day, M., & Howells, K. (2021). *Growth following adversity in sport: A mechanism to positive change* (Vol. 1). Routledge.



Walker, P. A. & Kampman, H. (2021). "It didn't bring back the old me but helped me on the path to the new me": Exploring posttraumatic growth in British veterans with PTSD.

*Disability and Rehabilitation*, 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09638288.2021.1995056>

Wassif, J. A. (2014). *The utilization of adventure based programming to foster posttraumatic growth within a veteran population: A mixed methods study*.

<https://doi.org/10.33915/etd.6920>